

## Message Text

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73

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 EB-04 AID-05 OES-02 FEA-01 INT-05

SWF-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /079 W

----- 121748

R 051115Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1802

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 3081

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EAID, CE, IR, UR

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTERS TRAVELS

REF: A) COLOMBO 2994; B) TEHRAN 9320;

C) COLOMBO 3042 NOTAL

1. SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER SEEMS PLEASED WITH \$67 MILLION AID PACKAGE FROM IRAN AND HOPES PROMOTE ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TIES WITH THAT COUNTRY. DURING FORTHCOMING VISIT TO USSR, SHE WILL SEEK SOVIET HELP ON SAMANALA WEWA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT. VISITS TO MALAYSIA, THAILAND, BURMA, AND NEPAL ARE BEING CONSIDERED FOR EARLY SPRING AS PART OF PM'S EFFORT TO RAISE HER INTERNATIONAL PROFILE IN ADVANCE 1976 NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT IN COLOMBO. END SUMMARY.

2. DINNER AT MY RESIDENCE NOVEMBER 4 IN PRIME MINISTERS HONOR WAS LARGELY SOCIAL BUT I HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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OPPORTUNITY BRIEFLY TO DISCUSS HER ECENT AND

FUTURE TRAVELS. SHE SEEMED GENERALLY PLEASED WITH HER IRANIAN VISIT AND EXPRESSED HOPE HER FORTHCOMING TRIP TO SOVIET UNION WOULD ALSO YIELD SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC RESULTS.

3. PM CONFIRMED \$67 MILLION ASSISTANCE PACKAGE, REPORTED TEHRAN'S 9320, NOTING IN PARTICULAR THAT \$27 MILLION FOR FERTILIZER PLANT WOULD CLOSE EXISTING GAP AND ENABLE GSL TO MOVE AHEAD WITH LONG-PLANNED UREA PLANT. (TOTAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE COST OF THIS PLANT NOW ESTIMATED AT ABOUT \$95 MILLION; IN ADDITION IRAN, OTHER CONTRIBUTORS ARE ADB, FRG, AND INDIA.) EIGHT MILLION DOLLAR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SUPPORT ALSO WAS HELPFUL ALTHOUGH, SHE COMMENTED, IRAN APPARENTLY DID NOT FAVOR THIS TYPE OF ASSISTANCE. JOINT ECONOMIC COOPERATION COMMITTEE, ESTABLISHED AS A RESULT OF HER VISIT, WOULD LOOK INTO EXPENDITURE OF \$67 MILLION CREDITS AS WELL AS OTHER AREAS OF ASSISTANCE.

4. PM SPOKE WITH GREAT ADMIRATION OF SHAH AND OF IRAN, SAYING THAT, ALTHOUGH SHAH SEEMED SOMEWHAT TIRED DURING HER MEETING WITH HIM, HE NONETHELESS HAD AN EXTRAORDINARY GRASP OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL SITUATION IN HIS COUNTRY AND ENCYCLOPEDIA KNOWLEDGE OF COST AND STATUS OF VARIOUS PROJECTS. WHILE SHE EXPRESSED HOPE MORE ASSISTANCE WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, SHE INDICATED TIMING OF IRANIAN ASSISTANCE WAS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO HER IN BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TERMS. FOR EXAMPLE, FINANCE MINISTER N.M. PERERA, WHO LEADS TROTSKYITE LSSP PARTY IN HER CABINET, WAS AT BOTTOM OF GANGWAY WHEN HER AIRCRAFT RETURNED, ANXIOUSLY AWAITING WORD AS TO HOW MUCH SHE HAD BROUGHT BACK SO THAT HE COULD TAKE IRANIAN ASSISTANCE INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN HE DELIVERS ANNUAL BUDGET MESSAGE NOV 6. PRIME MINISTER COMMENTED WITH SMILE THAT SHE HOPED THAT EVERY TIME CROWN PRINCE LOOKED AT HER BABY ELEPHANT GIFT HE WOULD THINK OF SRI LANKA AND ASK FATHER TO PROVIDE MORE HELP.

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5. I ASKED MRS BANDARANAIKE WHETHER SHE PLANNED TO EXCHANGE RESIDENT AMBASSADORS WITH IRAN. SHE REPLIED IRANIANS WERE STILL SOMEWHAT SENSITIVE TO SRI LANKA'S RELATIONS WITH IRAQ ALTHOUGH SHE HAD ATTEMPTED TO ALLAY THIS CONCERN BY POINTING OUT THAT IRAQ WAS ONE OF SRI LANKA'S LARGEST TEA BUYERS. DESPITE THESE LARGE TEA PURCHASES JFGT# HAD ONLY THIS YEAR

APPOINTED RESIDENT  
MCBAOZGBZZS# BAGHDAD IN  
PLACE OF CHARGE, WHILE IRAQ FOR NUMBER OF YEARS HAS  
HAD AMBASSADOR IN COLOMBO. SHE TOLD IRANIANS  
IT WOULD BE EXPENSIVE FOR GSL TO SET UP EMBASSY  
IN TEHRAN AT EARLY DATE AND SUGGESTED AS FIRST  
STEP THAT GOI ASSIGN AMBASSADOR TO COLOMBO.  
WYM PM SAID HER VISIT TO NEW DELHI, ALTHOUGH USEFUL  
IN TERMS OF PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY TO SEE MRS  
GANDHI AGAIN, WAS ORIGINALLY LAID ON BECAUSE  
RETURN COMMERCIAL AIRLINE SCHEDULES FROM TEHRAN  
VIA DELHI AND MADRAS RESULTED IN SEVERAL FREE  
HOURS IN DELHI. IRANIAN GOVT LATER OFFERED  
SPECIAL PLANE TO TRANSPORT HER DIRECTLY FROM  
TEHRAN TO COLOMBO, BUT SHE HAD ALREADY ACCEPTED  
MRS GANDHI'S LUNCH INVITATION AND CONSEQUENTLY  
WENT THROUGH WITH DELHI STOP. IT ENABLED HER TO  
DISCUSS FUTURE ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIA  
AND SRI LANKA.

7. NOTING THAT SHE WAS SCHEDULED LEAVE NEXT WEEKEND  
FOR VISIT TO SOVIET UNION, PM REITERATED REASON  
FOR EARLIER POSTPONEMENT OF MOSCOW VISIT (COLOMBO 2458).  
SHE HOPED USSR WOULD PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR SAMANALA  
WEWA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT IN BALANGODA DISTRICT  
WHICH SOVIET TECHNICIANS HAVE BEEN STUDYING FOR  
SOME TIME. (ADB, WHICH HAS ALSO SHOWN INTEREST  
IN THIS PROJECT, ESTIMATED IN 1973  
WOULD COST  
ABOUT \$70 MILLION WITH FOREIGN EXCHANGE COMPONENT  
ABOUT \$50 MILLION.) RECALLING THAT BALANGODA  
WAS HER BIRTHPLACE BUT HAD NOT RECEIVED MUCH IN  
WAY OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, PM SAID SHE HOPED  
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SOVIETS WOULD AGREE TO SAMANALA SCHEME WHICH  
WOULD BENEFIT OTHER AREAS AS WELL. SHE SEEMED  
REASONABLY CONFIDENT USSR WOULD COME THROUGH ON  
OJSAMANALA WEWA, OR OTHER MAJOR PROJECT, NOTING  
THAT SOVIETS WERE STILL CONCERNED ABOUT PRC'S GIFT  
OF SHOWPLACE BANDARANAIKE MEMORIAL HALL IN COLOMBO;  
THEY THEREFORE MIGHT SEEK WAS TO BALANCE OFF THIS  
PRC ASSISTANCE.

8. LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD, MRS BANDARANAIKE SAID  
THAT SHE WAS TENTATIVELY PLANNING TO VISIT OTHER  
PARTS OF SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA LATER NEXT SPRING  
ALTHOUGH FINAL DATES HAD NOT BEEN ARRANGED. VISITS  
TO MALAYSIA, THAILAND, BURMA, AND NEPAL ARE UNDER  
CONSIDERATION. THESE ADDITIONAL TRIPS, SHE NOTED,

WERE PART OF HER EFFORTS TO ENHANCE HER INTERNATIONAL  
STATURE IN ADVANCE OF NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT SCHEDULED  
FOR COLOMBO IN 1976. HOWEVER, SHE WAS AWARE THAT  
SHE HAD TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT THESE TRIPS. IF SHE  
TOOK TOO MANY, OPPOSITION POLITICIANS AND CITIZENS  
GENERALLY WOULD CRITICIZE HER FOR TRAVELLING  
EXCESSIVELY WHILE COUNTRY CONTINUES  
FACE SEVERE  
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AT HOME.  
VAN HOLLEN

NOTE BY OC/T: # AS RECEIVED.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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